
REPORT!

FEDERALIZING OUR POLICE

■ CRIME is rapidly increasing all across the nation. Since 1966 it has been growing at the greatly increased rate of twenty-five percent per year. Sociologists, college professors, government planners, and even criminals, themselves, offer a myriad of excuses and rationalizations. But the already rampant incidence of crime grows steadily worse.

Seeking to find why crime in America is expanding at such a frightening rate, we selected a pilot area (the State of North Dakota) with a police population small enough to make our necessarily limited survey meaningful, and began to ask questions of law officers. The answers we received were straightforward, uncomplicated, and marked by an amazing singleness of view. The police attribute America's rapidly rising incidence of crime to the failure of the courts, and especially of the U.S. Supreme Court. They consider themselves handcuffed, shackled, restricted, and harassed in their efforts to carry out their assigned task of protecting life and property.

The emphasis these officers place on the destructive role of the Supreme Court is significant. That Court is, after all, a branch of the federal government. It is the decisions of the Supreme Court which have so reduced

the options of law enforcement personnel that criminals are proliferating like locusts. But, now that growing crime has aroused the public, this same federal government has through another of its branches proposed a *federal* solution to the crime problem. This solution is federal aid to local police — for equipment, for training, and to finance consolidation. The symptoms are to be treated rather than the causes of the problem. The primary symptom is the inability of our police to deal effectively with rising crime. But this is not caused by bad training or faulty equipment or local control; the cause is the leniency, permissiveness, and pro-criminal attitude of the courts.

There is method in such federal madness. Stripped of bureaucratism, the solution proposed to reduce the problem created by the courts is federal aid, guidelines, and control of our police.

Since tyranny is impossible without a nationally centralized constabulary, wise men have always counselled against federal involvement in the functions of our local police. If history is any guide, tyranny is *inevitable* once control of the police has been nationally centralized. Ask a refugee from Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia about what can happen when control of the police has been federalized.

Touring North Dakota for THE REVIEW OF THE NEWS, I found that state the epitome of what most of us admire about rural America. Sun-bronzed farmers and rangy cattlemen

make up the bulk of the working population. They seemed to me to typify the self-reliance and self-discipline that made our country great. Drawing their livelihood from nature, they honor God's laws. Because the laws of God are of such importance to these fine people, it is a point of great pride to them that their state has the lowest crime rate in the nation. You would think that specialists from the crime-ridden federal capital would flock to North Dakota seeking advice. But, in keeping with the madness of recent years, the federal government plans to supply great quantities of "assistance, guidelines, and control" — of the kind it employs in Washington — to law-enforcement departments in relatively crime-free North Dakota.

Such fed-cop programs began in 1965 when the federal government funded the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance as a new bureau within the Justice Department. Grants to the states were made available for training, certification, and consolidation of local police forces. As it became known that "free" money was available, the states (as usual) fell all over themselves trying to get their share. North Dakota was among them.

In March of 1967, the North Dakota Legislature entertained a bill to establish a Law Enforcement Council. That Council would be empowered to recommend standards for local police, to provide training for them, and to accept grants from (and make contracts with) the federal government

in the field of law enforcement. During the debate on the bill, four opponents argued that federal aid would lead to federal control and, inevitably, federal tyranny. Their arguments were politely received without rebuttal. But, in spite of the fact that not a single Legislator dared to speak in favor of the bill, it passed by a slim margin. Small appropriations from Washington were immediately accepted, and the new Law Enforcement Council began to think big. After all, there was big money to be had from the federal government.

As the Supreme Court continued to move Leftward and crime continued to spiral upward, Congress passed the Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act of 1968. With the passage of this bill, millions of federal dollars became available to the states for "crime control." The bureaucrats in Washington and in the state capitals joined hands in a program which amounts to the buying and selling of the independence and autonomy of our local police.

The Executive Director of the federally financed North Dakota Law Enforcement Council is Vance K. Hill. A native of North Dakota, Mr. Hill is a veteran civil employee. Though still a young man, he thinks and acts like a seasoned Washington bureaucrat. He wants more federal money for his Law Enforcement Council, and he expects to use that money to put himself in charge of "guidelines" for every police force in the state. Vance Hill knows that all federally financed programs mean federal rules, federal standards,

and federal control. They really can't mean anything else.

How do we know that this is what Mr. Hill wants? Because he is very brazen about it. In December of 1969, he published his plans in the *North Dakota Law Enforcement Council Report*, and sent it to Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs, and others all across the state.

The Hill recommendations called for "eliminating the built-in inefficiencies of small departments" and consolidating all law enforcement and regulatory personnel into "one level of police service." This, he noted, is to be accomplished with federal funds and, according to the Omnibus Crime and Safe Streets Act of 1968 from whence the funds will come, the plan must be "approved" by Washington. Bureaucrat Hill, to be blunt, recommends one master policeman who is to be an agent of the federal government.

The reaction to these proposals was swift. The North Dakota Police Chiefs Association called a special meeting and unanimously recommended that Director Hill be fired. Unfortunately, the wrath of the Chiefs was directed more at Hill than at the scheme for federal takeover which he represents.

To their credit, however, most of the Chiefs with whom I spoke in North Dakota were well aware of what the fed-cop proposals are all about. Small town Chiefs like Dan Vetsch of Northwood, Earl Miller of Emerado, and Charles Doppler of Steele, told me they want no part of this bid for federal control. They spoke freely and forthrightly of the potential for

tyranny. Chief Vredenburg of Mandan, and Chief Atoll of Williston, said they consider the situation very grave indeed. Chief Vredenburg, a wily veteran who somehow manages to project the image of both a tough policeman and a wise grandfather, assessed the program for me this way: "If these people really meant to help us, they'd ask what our needs might be. Since they dictate, I expect that they've got more than 'helping' us in mind."

Another police administrator who knows a great deal about this federal program is Chief Edwin Anderson of Fargo, the President of the North Dakota Police Chiefs Association. But, when I visited Chief Anderson, he acted like a youngster trying to get away from a truant officer. "I don't want federal control," he blurted, "but I'll take all the federal money I can get." I wanted to explore the matter more fully, but he streaked for the door. As I asked Chiefs across the state about their unanimous resolution recommending that Vance Hill be fired, I discovered that many believe Chief Anderson is "sitting on the resolution and will keep it from the press." A number told me they believe that, if Vance Hill gets his fed-cop show on the road, Chief Anderson will be the beneficiary of a new job with a fat federal salary.

From Fargo in the east, I traveled to the state capital at Bismarck, enjoying a look at the Great Plains. The farmers in this area believe they cultivate the finest farmland in the world. It well may be! But they are an

unhappy lot, no longer independent. The federal government has literally taken over agriculture. These farmers claim they are now controlled by the government — which tells them how much they may plant, and even what price they will be paid for their crops. Recognition of this fact is universal. The farmers of North Dakota might well be concerned that a drive is now underway to put our local police in the same cage as that into which they have themselves been entrapped.

I interviewed fed-cop Director Vance Hill at the state capital. He was confident as he welcomed me into his office. Before I had a chance to ask a single question he assured me of his long personal history of warning about the dangers of federal aid. I swallowed hard. Somehow he feels that federal aid to police is different from federal aid to agriculture, to schools, or to anything else from which he will not personally benefit. I asked Hill his opinion of the view expressed by Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson in the famous 1942 ruling on the Agricultural Adjustment Act. I even quoted Mr. Justice Jackson, lest lawyer Hill claim ignorance:

It is hardly lack of due process for the government to regulate that which it subsidizes.

"That was long ago!" Hill scoffed.

I asked why the people were not clamoring for the fed-cop program if it was so necessary. Vance Hill's offhand reply was that "the people don't have the necessary information." Which can be translated only one of two ways:

(1) The people of North Dakota are too stupid to know what's good for them; or (2) The bureaucrats will supply information so that the people of North Dakota will begin to think like the bureaucrats want them to.

How did he feel about the unanimous recommendation of the Police Chiefs Association that he be fired? Incredibly, he insisted that the vote was "not representative of the views of police chiefs." I asked about the newspaper editorials blasting him as "a little Himmler." He was waiting for that one. With an air of casual disdain, Vance Hill attributed the sentiment to his arch foe, Truman Wold, editor of the weekly *Northwood Gleaner*. He was right about Wold, whose editorial had certainly likened the whole fed-cop scheme to that employed in Germany by the Nazis. I produced another editorial — this one from the newspaper at Steele, North Dakota — which also compared Hill's program to "the Gestapo in Hitler's Germany." Vance flushed, and for once he had nothing to say.

Mr. Hill is typical of the government planners who arrogantly insist that they are the natural rulers of mankind. Often such people mean to rule well — but they mean to rule. At one point in our interview, Director Hill announced flatly: "These things are coming; it's simply a matter of when." As he expostulated, my eye caught a sign displayed on the bulletin board of his office. It declared: "Be Reasonable — Do It My Way!"

If Vance Hill has his way, the

federal government will soon provide close to \$2 million to ensure his control of law enforcement in North Dakota. The police there will be reorganized, retrained, and reequipped. Many small town policemen will be replaced by strangers who neither know their community nor are themselves known by the people they are supposed to serve. All this will fall under the jurisdiction of one man in North Dakota — an agent of the vast bureaucracy in Washington.

And, how will Mr. Hill operate then? Perhaps we can get some idea from those proposals he offered in his published *Report*. There he called for the placing throughout the state of public prosecutors "in charge of police." So far is he to the Left that he would even socialize the practice of law. One Hill proposal actually called for the stationing of public defenders throughout North Dakota, "who will eventually make the private practice of law obsolete."

Vance Hill became a state official in 1963, when he was appointed as an Assistant Attorney General. One of his assignments was to assist in a program of police training. So radical is he that in this capacity he went so far as to propose at a training session that officers be disarmed after dark. Many Chiefs of Police reminded me of this as I traveled from one end of North Dakota to the other.

In an effort to determine the attitude of state officials about this whole drive toward federalization, I spoke with Attorney General Helgi Johaness-

son, who had appointed Hill to his staff in 1963. Mr. Johanesson is a kindly and elderly gentleman who talks like a conservative one minute and like a willing collaborator with big government the next. "I think federal aid is dangerous," he offered, "but I'm sure that the Nixon Administration returns money to the states with no strings attached!" Besides, Mr. Johanesson says, he doesn't "think that the machinery exists for Vance Hill to implement his proposals." Hill disagrees, and so do those State Senators and citizens who have done their homework.

Summing up, the Attorney General claims he sees no threat in Mr. Hill's proposals, and nothing but the best of motives in federal aid and guidelines from the Nixon Administration. A Republican himself, he thinks socialism is fine if it is enforced by Republicans. I thought of a remark by a friend of mine that "If there really is a two-party system in this country, then the Republicans-Democrats is one of them!"

North Dakotans, like a lot of other Americans, have let down their guard. Totalitarian pressures have crept into their affairs just as they have elsewhere. But there is an increasing awareness of the seriousness of this particular situation among the people. A number of *Support Your Local Police* Committees have sprung up in North Dakota and are sounding the alarm. Again, much of the indignation is directed at Vance Hill rather than at the federal grab for our police which he repre-

sents, but it is now becoming obvious to many that Vance could be replaced by someone just like him without the federal planners so much as stopping to take a deep breath.

What then should the people of North Dakota do?

I put that question to veteran State Senator Duane Mutch of Larimore. Senator Mutch was one of the four who in 1967 spoke out against the establishment of the Law Enforcement Council. He concurred in the belief that replacing Hill would accomplish nothing and suggested the abolition of the Law Enforcement Council and (with it) the potential for accepting federal money and control. "A petition with 10,000 names would place the matter before the voters in a referendum," he offered. "This would enable a sufficiently aroused public to tell the feds that North Dakota wants *local* police."

Many North Dakotans with whom I spoke find it simply incredible that federal planners from Washington would dare to offer advice and assistance to law enforcement in their state. They are well aware that while the federal capital leads the nation with the highest crime rate, North Dakota has the lowest. One wry rancher suggested: "Maybe we ought to offer Washington some of our small town policemen whom Vance Hill thinks are so inefficient." With a smile, he added, "No, that wouldn't work — none of them would be crazy enough to go!"

Warned that a federalized police would lead to tyranny, a few North

Dakotans still respond that "the people won't allow it." Yet, some who oppose the program to federalize police in North Dakota are already afraid to speak out against it. Others just want to get on with what they see as a gravy train. The federal planners and Vance Hill are counting on their own prestige and the appeal of big federal money to wear down any opposition.

Unfortunately, the stakes are a lot higher than who gets how much from the federal government. At stake is freedom itself. There should be no price on that commodity.

The people of North Dakota are in a position to render the nation and themselves a singular service. It's well past time for Americans to band together to tell the federal government that there is no price anyone can put on their local sovereignty. If North Dakota can send the Vance Hills and their federal programs packing, the idea will catch on elsewhere.

The American people are being bullied by their own government. The issue of federal aid to local police may well be that final line beyond which even a "little guy" must fight the bully. North Dakota is full of the kind of men and women who are the backbone of this great nation — freedom-loving, hard-working, God-fearing "little guys." It could be that the federal planners have met their match. It could be that the tough promoters of the fed-cop program are about to suffer a severe loss at the hands of the "little guys." How about it, North Dakota? — JOHN F. MCMANUS ■ ■

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**WHAT ARE THE
ANARCHIST
BOMBERS
REALLY AFTER?**

(See Pages 15 and 27.)

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